UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/659
16 July 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 16 JULY 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 15 July 1998, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

98-20908 (E) 170798

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Annex

Letter dated 15 July 1998 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1088 (1996) of 12 December 1996, I attach the eighteenth monthly report on the operations of the Stabilization Force (see appendix). I would appreciate your making the report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Monthly report to the United Nations Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. On 20 June 1998, the Stabilization Force (SFOR) continued its mission under the renewed mandate provided by Security Council resolution 1174 (1998).

2. There are approximately 36,000 troops currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. This includes contributions from all North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations and, with effect from 20 June, from 22 non-NATO nations, Argentina and Slovakia being the latest additions.

3. Over the reporting period (21 May to 20 June 1998), SFOR continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols. Approximately 2,270 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, with the SFOR helicopter fleet flying approximately 125 hours.

4. In late May, in line with the restructuring agreement concluded by the Office of the High Representative in February 1998, SFOR began its withdrawal from the five transmission towers used by Srpska Radio Television at Duga Nijva, Udrigovo and Veliki Zep in Multinational Division (North) and at Trebevic and Leotar in Multinational Division (South-East). The Leotar Tower was returned on 22 May, the Duga Nijva Tower on 28 May and the Udrigovo Tower on 30 May. The other two towers will be transferred in due course.

5. The Stabilization Force has continued to increase its monitoring of crossing points on the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in order to help ensure compliance with the prohibition on the transport of weapons established by Security Council resolution 1160 (1998). The Stabilization Force has been tasked, within its existing mission and capabilities, to forward to NATO headquarters any information on suspected violations of resolution 1160 (1998), so that it can be transmitted to the United Nations Secretariat.

Cooperation and compliance by the Parties

6. The Parties remain substantially compliant with most military provisions of the Peace Agreement across the whole area of operations. However, over the reporting period a number of Bosniac and Bosnian Serb homes were destroyed by arson attacks.

7. The Stabilization Force continues to monitor compliance with the Common Licence Plate Programme. Over the reporting period, SFOR confiscated 4 Bosnian Croat and 9 Bosniac military vehicles for a 30-day period from non-compliance with the Programme.

8. On 12 June, a group of approximately 150 Bosnian Croats set up 2 roadblocks near the village of Zepce, in Multinational Division (North) to protest the lack of common vehicle licence plates. The protest continued on 13 June, when a third roadblock was established 5 kilometres east of the village. After several meetings over the 2 days between SFOR troops in the area, the mayor of Zepce and

the representatives of the local businessmen who had organized the roadblocks, the situation was resolved and civilian freedom of movement restored on all roads. No violent incidents were reported.

9. Over the reporting period, SFOR troops conducted a total of 314 military weapons storage sites inspections: 80 Bosniac; 70 Bosnian Croat; 146 Bosnian Serb; and 18 Federation. The following weapons were confiscated: from the Bosnian Serbs, 3 64-mm rocket launchers, 1 rifle grenade, 2 boxes of small arms ammunition and several 82-mm mortar rounds; from the Federation, 11 grenades; in addition, on 3 June, SFOR troops confiscated 150 kilograms of ammunition, 2 rifles, 3,500 cartridges, 21 grenades and several explosive devices during inspections of a further 15 sites. In accordance with SFOR policy, the confiscated weapons will be destroyed, after a period of time to allow for appeals.

10. With regard to the Republika Srpska Specialist Police, the Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade and the Police Unit for the Protection of Persons and Buildings have now met the requirements established by SFOR on 15 August 1997. On 10 June, SFOR and the Republika Srpska Ministry of the Interior agreed on the proposed structure for the new Republika Srpska Specialist Police Service and their training programme, which will be led and implemented by the United Nations International Police Task Force. The training programme is scheduled to last from 29 June to 4 September 1998. On completion of certification under the new structure, the former Republika Srpska Specialist Police will be employed as a specialist police force by the Republika Srpska Government, capable of responding to civil requirements and disasters beyond the capability of the local police. However, the decision to transfer the Republika Srpska Specialist Police supervision from Annex 1-A to Annex 11 of the Peace Agreement remains the decision of the Commander of the Stabilization Force.

11. Over the reporting period, SFOR monitored a total of 1,609 training and movement activities: 525 Bosniac; 68 Bosnian Croat; 942 Bosnian Serb; and 74 Federation. The Stabilization Force imposed a training and movement ban (from 25 May to 28 June) on the 505th Bosnian Serb Army Brigade, due to the presence in the Pale area of 5 armed soldiers without identification cards. A second ban was imposed (from 25 June to 14 July) on the 521st Bosnian Serb Brigade and on the 55th Battalion of Military Police, due to non-compliance during an exercise on 7 June.

12. Stabilization Force troops monitored 675 demining operations: 233 Bosniac; 211 Bosnian Croat; 221 Bosnian Serb; and 10 Federation. A total of 175 anti-tank mines, 1,255 anti-personnel mines and 84 items of unexploded ordnance were removed. There are currently no bans imposed on the Entity Armed Forces for non-compliance with demining operations.

13. On 4 June, a meeting of the Joint Military Commission took place at the Bosnian Serb Army Officers' club in Banja Luka, the first such meeting to be held outside Sarajevo. The Stabilization Force invited the army commanders to consider ideas for joint activities between the Entity Armed Forces as a means to develop further confidence and security building measures.

Cooperation with international organizations

14. Within its capabilities, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in theatre, working routinely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the International Police Task Force, the Office of the High Representative, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

15. The Stabilization Force continues to support OSCE in its preparations for the September elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through the provision of a secure environment for voters' registration. Registration of candidates and parties is proceeding, although the registration period has been extended until 28 June.

16. On 28 May, in Banja Luka, and on 15 June in Foca, SFOR troops detained two individuals indicted for war crimes and ensured their transportation to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

17. The Stabilization Force continues to provide assistance to the Office of the High Representative in the field of civil air traffic. The revisions to the Memorandum of Understanding, which will permit cargo operations and allow commercial aircraft to remain overnight at Sarajevo airport, have been agreed by SFOR and are now awaiting approval from the Council of Ministers. In addition, two scheduled services have been introduced over the last month in Banja Luka airport.

18. The Stabilization Force continues to play an active role in providing support to the efforts of the Office of the High Representative to establish joint institutions, particularly the Standing Committee on Military Matters. At the Standing Committee on Military Matters meeting of 21 May, SFOR presented a paper on possible cross-Inter-Entity Boundary Line helicopter flights being conducted by the Entity Armed Forces, in order to transport senior ministers on political duties. The paper was accepted by the Tri-Presidency, who instructed that further work be carried out on the concept, supervised by the secretariat of the Standing Committee on Military Matters.

Outlook

19. Returns of refugees and displaced persons are likely to continue to increase tension and to be accompanied by acts of intimidation and violence, particularly in Central Bosnia and Mostar. The Stabilization Force will continue to help ensure the provision of a secure environment to support and promote phased and orderly returns in accordance with its mandate, but not forcibly return displaced persons or undertake to guard individual locations.

20. The continuation of SFOR beyond 20 June will permit the force to continue to deter renewed hostilities and to contribute to a secure environment for the ongoing implementation of the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement, promoting a transition of emphasis from military to civil implementation. At the same time, SFOR will provide broad support, within its mandate and within means and capabilities, for civil implementation, in particular to key aspects such as

public security, the return of refugees and displaced persons, the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the September elections. Through the incorporation of a multinational specialized unit which will operate as an integral part of SFOR under the same rules of engagement as other elements, it will have an enhanced capability to support the local authorities in responding to civil disorder, without engaging in police functions, in close cooperation with the Office of the High Representative and the International Police Task Force.

21. The continuation of SFOR has been accompanied by the adoption of a transition strategy as an integral part of the force's mission. This strategy will permit and promote a gradual and progressive reduction in the size, role and profile of the force as emphasis shifts from military to civil implementation, leading to eventual full withdrawal, with residual responsibilities being transferred to the common institutions, other civil authorities or other international organizations, as appropriate. Formal reviews will be conducted after the September elections and no later than December 1998, and thereafter at intervals of not more than six months to assess, against a set of identified criteria for measuring progress, the security situation and the overall implementation of the Peace Agreement. These reviews will permit the Allies, in consultation with other SFOR contributors, to consider the possible scope for force reductions, taking into account the level of support required for military and civil implementation and the requirements for deterrence.